



Concordia deal done

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It was down to the wire late last week for the \$90 million deal to relocate Concordia University from its current 22-acre campus on the edge of downtown to a new home at the 385-acre Schlumberger Ltd. site in Northwest Austin.

Two transactions--one for the purchase of the new site and another for the sale of the existing one--closed simultaneously on Friday. Steve Sanders with The Staubach Co. in Austin represented Concordia in both deals.

"The deal itself was a very interesting one," says Sanders. "This was the toughest assignment I've ever worked on."

Concordia needed the proceeds from the sale of its existing campus to developer Andy Sarwal in order to complete the purchase of the new site. That meant a complicated synchronization of the two transactions, both of which were dependent on zoning changes for the new uses.

Sarwal is planning East Avenue on the site, a mixed-use development that will include 1,450 residential units, 545,000 square feet of commercial space and up to 250 hotel rooms. The city council just approved the zoning for that project on Tuesday.

Sanders says there were several last minute requests in the days leading up to the closing of the transactions that could have put the entire deal in jeopardy. "There were several days starting at 8 in the morning and going until midnight and turning around and doing it the next day," he says. "It was definitely down to the wire."

Concordia is taking over the former Schlumberger campus--about 250 acres of which is set aside as a preserve.

"Getting this closing behind us permits the school to now look ahead to completing the design of the campus and continue to the next phase of this move," says David Kluth, vice president of university services for Concordia. "It's an important milestone that we've hit."

About 200,000 square feet of existing space at the new campus will be renovated for use by the university along with another 200,000 square feet of planned new construction in the first phase, Kluth says.

Roughly 1,300 students are now enrolled at Concordia. The university expects enrollment to surpass 2,000 once the move is complete within a couple years.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin